

Issue Eight July 2017

aargh!

Aotearoa Anarchist Review

The FUTURE?

LIVE: G20-Proteste in St.Pauli



G20-Konzert in der Elbphilharmonie



G20-GIPFEL IN HAMBURG

BEETHOVENS "ODE AN DIE FREUDE" IN DER ELBPHILHARMONIE

The orchestra plays Beethoven's *Ode to Joy* while outside capitalism crumbles...

WELCOME to issue eight of aargh! - the *Aotearoa Anarchist Review of Genuine Happiness*.

It's been a long time since the last issue and we've had a few changes at the Freedom Shop. A long-standing member has left, but we've also had a few new people join us. And the shop has moved to the back of the op-shop.

The last issue, *What is Anarchism*, turned out a bit depressing, so we tried to make this one more uplifting. We tried. But there is only so much one can do in this world for these are strange times.

Neo-liberalism is strangling humanity, ecological catastrophes and war abound. At their recent G20 meeting in Hamburg, Germany, the leaders of the so-called free-world offered a glimpse of the future as we watched the simultaneous broadcast by a German TV station of Beethoven's *Ode to Joy* being performed for the rich, while the people outside were kept at bay by water cannons and riot cops. The screen shot on the front page is from this programme.

This future consists of building bigger walls, better control systems, and amassing more resources to make the elite feel safer while the position of 'their citizens' is becoming more precarious.

Increasingly we hear the label 'consumer' used to describe the 'legal' public. Citizens are consumers who live to work and live to consume; they chase the promised 'happiness'. Failure is their own fault or the

fault of migrants, refugees, poor, indigenous and other stigmatised (non main-stream, 'non-legal') people.

But at least the G20 got a deserving welcome in Hamburg. We saw people show that we can break out of the neo-liberal stupor, smash the chains of control, and protest. We saw the will to fight.

So in this issue of aargh! there may be a pessimistic piece about the state of protesting in a neo-liberal world, but we also write how we already run the world. To add a bit of inspiration there are photos from Hamburg, and for direct action inspiration we have a series of pictures depicting what happened when a German farmer took exception to the cops turning up on his farm. They were there to force him to earmark his cows (another wonderful EU regulation). The damage of one farmer and his tractor is a joy.

We also have a piece on the rising popularity of walls and a discussion about the commoditisation of bodies. There are a couple of book reviews and we even venture into astrology with an essential voting guide (although we don't believe in either – but if you must vote, then read this).

To end we have a light-hearted quiz about anarchy & a recipe that may come in useful at the next demo, because surely we will fight back.

The Freedom Shop collective

**aargh! is an anarchist periodical produced in
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**Contact us by e-mail at freedomshopaotearoa@gmail.com
or, if you are conversant with the technology, write to us by 'post' at
P.O. Box 9263,
Wellington 6141,
Aotearoa/New Zealand**

**And check our blog for news and events at
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How We run the world

By Sam Buchanan

SOME years ago I spent a few months working as a volunteer on an island in the Pacific about a thousand kilometers from the nearest major land mass. At the time, it had a total population of 14 people, all working for the same government department.

Of course, the normal apparatus of the state didn't exist. No police, no prisons, no coercive capability at all. Most of us weren't getting paid, so we couldn't really be sacked – anyhow removing us from the island would have cost a small fortune as there was no regular transport service (a total of two yachts dropped by while I was there and we saw a container ship pass by once).

Yet we did have a hierarchy. There was the boss, four paid staff, who acted as team leaders while we were working, and nine volunteers. Despite that, everything worked splendidly – to the extent that the hierarchy was dysfunctional. When it functioned everything turned to shit. Luckily that wasn't very often.

Essentially, if the boss made a decision we didn't like we either ignored him or called a secret meeting of trusted folk, decided how things should be and informed the boss at the next staff meeting. He was a reasonably smart boss and always went along with us. There was only one matter in which we thought he might overrule us, so we maintained the classic expedient of making sure he knew nothing about it.

So everything went well, the work got done, we had a pretty good time, and everyone looked out for each other.

This is a somewhat clearer example of the uselessness of hierarchy than most situations we find ourselves in. It was almost like somebody had set up an experiment – let's put 14 random and very different people on an island with some tasks to carry out and see what

happens. But the situation is familiar to everyone who has been in a modern workplace. Workers consider bosses worthwhile to the extent they don't act like bosses, but as facilitators. The smart ones communicate well with their underlings, listen to what they say and don't interfere too much.

Workers ignore the hierarchy as much as they can and, when the boss isn't looking, communicate horizontally with their peers in order to get things done.

This secret – or at least, seldom discussed – informal everyday anarchism ensures that things get done in spite of, rather than because of, the hierarchies and formal systems created to run things. Funnily enough, lots of people seem to be vaguely aware of this, although they wouldn't call it anarchism. Thoughtful workers often agree that the boss is a waste of space, and mean this seriously, not just as an insult. And I've known a number of managers who quietly admitted that the systems didn't really work and just told us to play along.

Nobody ever plans this secret anarchism, it is just inherent in the way humans work together. Modern management techniques often try to harness the creative power of anarchism by creating fake egalitarian structures – 'teams' and 'units' where everyone is supposed to work together cooperatively – but they never remove the hierarchy that sets the goals and has the final say on decisions. Methodologies such as Management By Wandering About (in which the boss spends time on the shop floor or whatever, randomly chatting to workers) are supposed to bring bosses closer to the workers and may result in better informed bosses, but never impact on the fundamental power relationship between the two groups. They are, however, an implicit, and sometimes even, explicit, admission that hierarchy doesn't really work.



Even those who think hierarchy is necessary are constantly trying to qualify it – wanting authority to consult, to be responsive to those under it and to limit its power. It doesn't exist because it achieves things, but because those in power are terrified of losing control over exactly what should be achieved.

There are many reasons why hierarchy doesn't work. Exercising authority pisses people off, except in emergencies or when the authority genuinely has expert knowledge – in which case any sensible person would follow their instructions regardless of the authority they hold.

This is seldom the situation though, as one of the characteristics of hierarchy is that a person actually engaged in carrying out a specific task is liable to know more about it than a person trying to manage a variety of tasks. As information passes up the ladder, it is altered according to the bias of the person handling it, or according to what the person handling it regards as beneficial to tell their boss. Bosses like to think they know what's going on but are routinely

kept in the dark or actively lied to. Most workers instinctively know that they can manipulate their boss by only telling them certain things. "Everything's going fine, mate (don't tell him about the such and such, we'll sort it out when he's gone)".

Workers also usually want to get things done, and keeping the boss from interfering, or misinforming them, is often the best strategy to this end. One place I worked in had a leaking roof over the storeroom. After much fruitless complaining and pointing out that quite apart from just annoying us, the company would also suffer as stock would be damaged, we finally got it fixed by refusing to work in it for safety reasons. The boss had to accept that after we showed him some pieces of concrete that had 'fallen from the ceiling'. They had indeed – after a guy had climbed a ladder and knocked them off with a hammer.

Irritating as this situation is, we should take heart from it. Anarchism is already running the world. Hierarchy is just getting in the way. @@@

The commoditisation of bodies

By Sojourn

I was optimistic when I saw the newspaper headline accompanying the photo: "Storm in a C-cup? Bare breast billboard causes a stir in Bulls". I assumed it was concern about the commoditisation of bodies, the female body in particular. However, my optimism was short-lived. The concern was that the advert was too close to the statue of the bull on the highway into the town of Bulls. It detracted from the tourist symbol of the town – the bull.

One person stated, "There's worse things in the world that are happening today than this sign that has hands covering a pair of tits, isn't there? It doesn't bother me."

Well, I think they've got it wrong. A lot of the "worse things happening" that the speaker alludes to could be alleviated by calling out and stopping exploitation at all levels in this capitalist patriarchal white-supremacist world we live in, including stopping exploitive billboards in Bulls. Because it is exploitive, and it is sexist. The image of a perfume bottle nestled between a pair of breasts covered by a pair of hands is not respectful of anyone. It is not respectful of the

particular individual's body, the female body or the people viewing the image. I also believe it is not respectful of sex and sexuality.

The "worse things happening" will keep happening as long as we never draw the links between capitalism, exploitation and the commoditization of everything, including bodies and sex.

In the world we live in bodies are used to advertise products as diverse as cars, food, drinks, internet connections and perfume. The body (predominantly female or female-looking) is draped over vehicles or pictured semi-naked in front of some product, including posed with a bottle of perfume such as the billboard in Bulls. The Bulls advert is a classic example designed to both titillate the viewer and re-enforce stereotypes; it re-enforces the belief that the ideal female body is a certain size and shape and decorated a certain way (and this particular advert also enforces the ideal of a certain skin tone). We see these types of images in newspapers, on the back of buses, on web-sites, on flyers and leaflets, and on billboards on the side of highways – we see these images daily and we internalize what they mean.

These images teach us that the female body (and any body that has no privileged position in this world) is a commodity. It is there for pleasure or use, usually a sexual use. It teaches us that certain bodies don't (or should not) have any agency. Some bodies are public property; some bodies are just passive objects. We learn that it's ok to objectify and devalue people.

It is these images that help keep the wheels of the world we live in turning. As we grow-up we absorb these images and the majority of us are socialized into accepting them as the norm. Stereotypes are reinforced and gender roles reproduced, concepts of sex and sexuality are accepted as defined by the dominant forces. The result is societies with stark dichotomies between male and female. People identifying as female are submissive, male are dominant. Female are passive, male active. The images also assert what is the ideal body – the best colour, size, shape – all these cohere to ensure we learn what is ideal. We place worth on how people fit the ideal image.

We internalize the commoditization of the body and when we look at ourselves, we also see ourselves as an object. We see how we look when viewed through capitalist white supremacist lens. The result is some people jump through hoops to try to measure up and meet the standard of the ideal body; a lot of time, energy and money are spent to try and match the image (both internally and externally). Even children as young as five can be sent to beauty parlors to learn how to be a 'female'.

Some of my friends argue that it is different when we have the choice to be involved in this industry. When we deliberately and knowingly use our own body in these images or are in charge of the making of the image, they tell me that it is empowering and liberating for all of us. They say that it is subverting white supremacy and patriarchy.

Examples pointed to include singers and role-models like Beyoncé and Caitlyn Jenner who have both been pictured on the cover pages of famous north American magazines. The photo of Beyoncé, who Time magazine describes as one of the 100 most influential people in the world, has her clad in child-like knickers and bras; she appears passive and infantilized. Caitlyn Jenner, runner-up in the Time person of the year competition, has also featured as the cover image on other magazines. In one interview Caitlyn stated, "the hardest part about being a woman is figuring out what to wear." She also made a similar statement about lipstick.

I do not find these and their other examples empowering. Empowerment is much more than an individual making the free choice to be involved in commoditizing bodies. Empowerment is more than making money, and even becoming rich, using the tools of the capitalist patriarchy. That is only individual success under short-term neo-liberal goals. Long-term, all we are doing is replicating the commoditization of bodies under capitalism. In a way it reminds me of green and pink washing; when we do the same as the patriarchy does, is there any difference?

Further, many people have no choice about whether they are involved in the production of these images or not. They are exploited – like most people in this capitalist world.

And we have no control over how the image is viewed. Under photographic lens we all become objects to be bought, fondled and abused at the hands of the powerful.

Billboards like the one in Bulls keep capitalism pumping and patriarchy alive. We learn that what is needed to be happy in this world is all wrapped up in body parts; the body with no control, no self-determination, no autonomy, no agency. We learn that certain bodies are fuckable commodities – a commodity that can be fucked over in all senses of the word.

"Worse things happening" will keep happening until we manage to transform the world we live in. We need to decolonize our minds from this patriarchal white-supremacist society that has been foisted upon us.

When bodies are disposable commodities – they are too easily discarded on the waste pile of capitalism, in body bags or not. @@@



Want better neighbours? Build more walls!

By Peppertree

A lot is being written at the moment about Donald Trump's plan to build a 3000 km wall along the border between the US and Mexico. Of course, it's an insane project (although one that would probably create thousands of jobs for a number of years, allowing Trump to fulfil two of his promises at the same time), but it's only the most visible expression of his racist and nationalistic agenda. The existing border is already quite tight and the threat of deportation is a far bigger worry for many people.

What is often ignored, is the fact that Trump is simply continuing a project that his predecessors have started – almost 1000 km are already 'secured' by a 4m high fence. And this 'fence' includes steel girders every few metres, along with an array of electronic surveillance and detection devices. The distinction between a wall and a fence becomes blurred. After all, the famous "Berlin Wall" was only a concrete wall in Berlin – for most of its length it was a wire fence, albeit with a minefield next to it.

But as with everything else, by focussing the attention on one extremist, others doing almost the same slip past unnoticed. A Swiss newspaper counted a total of 11 walls between countries back in 1989. Now, it says, there are about 70. Here are some of the lesser known ones.

In 2014, the Ukraine announced plans to build almost 2000 km of wall along its border with Russia. The official reason – this was at the time of the Russian intervention in the Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea – was to keep out Russian terrorists. Another reason was probably Ukraine's desire to join the EU. The EU would likely make a fortification of that border an entry condition, with it becoming an external EU border. Construction started in 2016, but has stalled due to a lack of money.

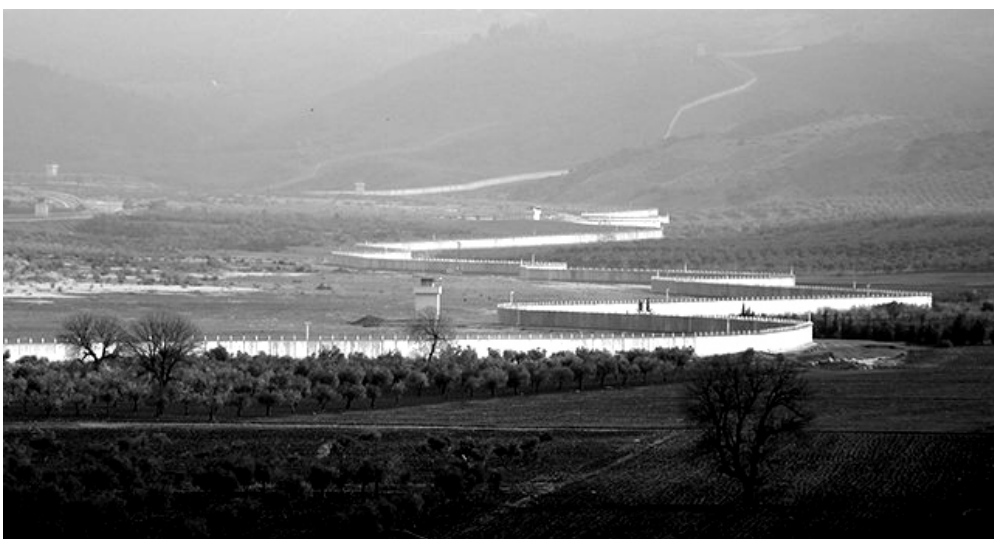
When in September 2015, thousands of refugees formed the "march of hope" and walked straight across the Balkan countries to Austria and on to Germany and Sweden, the response by most countries was to build walls. Hungary, for example, built a barbed wire fence along its southern border. In February 2017, Hungary started doubling up by building a second fence alongside the first one.

A little bit further south, the border between Macedonia and Greece now also has a veritable fence to show, patrolled by border guards from all over the EU. Several years earlier, Greece had built a wall along the Evros river which forms the Turkish border.

Turkey has been building a wall along its border with Syria for some time. As of March 2017, 290 of 500 km were finished. This is kind of ironic, given that only a few months earlier, Turkey's Prime Minister Binali

Yildirim reportedly said these very true words about Trump's wall plans: "You build walls but walls are never a solution. They will eventually be torn down as the Berlin wall that stood there for years." In a slightly Orwellian twist, the wall is being built by the state-owned housing agency TOKI.

The Turkish wall is officially there to prevent people from crossing over into Syria and join the IS. Of course it also does a good job of stopping Syrian refugees from coming



The wall between Turkey and Syria

to Europe, and that is probably why the EU is funding it. For the Turkish government, the important thing is that it separates Turkish from Syrian Kurds and weakens the autonomous Rojava region in northern Syria. As Yildirim said: "Turkey will never allow the formation of an 'artificial state' in northern Syria." Maybe Trump even got his idea of "making Mexico pay for it" from Turkey's President Erdogan, who managed to make the EU pay for his wall.

On Europe's southern fringe, the Spanish enclaves Ceuta and Melilla within Morocco are completely walled in to keep African refugees out of Europe. The original simple wire fences from the 1990s have been heavily fortified in recent years. The BBC reported in 2009 that "the height of each wall was increased to 6m, infrared cameras were installed, as well as tear gas canisters, noise and movement sensors and control towers. A maze of interlocking cables and spikes await anyone who manages to scale the moving ladder-resistant summit of the first fences."

And even within the EU (well, as it is at the moment), borders are en vogue. After evicting almost 10,000 people from the "jungle" camp in Calais in October 2016, the local authorities built a wall along the highway leading to the port. To make it look less like what it is, the wall includes "plants and flowers on one side to reduce its visual impact on the local area", according to the BBC. The wall is paid for by the UK, and the construction company also happens to have a €900 million contract for the expansion of the Calais port.

In the Middle-East and Asia, there is also no shortage of border walls, the most well-known one being the wall built by the Israeli government to separate Israeli settlements from Palestine.

Saudi-Arabia has just started building a wall along its border with Iraq, which according to the British Telegraph includes a trench and "five layers of fencing with watch towers, night-vision cameras and radar cameras." This is in addition to the already existing fence along Saudi-Arabia's southern border with Yemen.

The further east one looks, the longer the walls become. Since 2007, Iran has been building a wall along its 700 km border with Pakistan to stop drug trafficking, leaving only a few legal crossings.

Pakistan's government announced in 2005 an ambitious plan to erect a fence along the entire 4000 km border with Afghanistan, also to keep drug traffickers out. There were even plans to mine the border, to which



The brand new wall in Calais, France

Afghanistan objected. Instead an 1100 km trench and 35 km of fence have been built so far. But the plans aren't off the table, as a government spokesperson pointed out in June 2016: "We also intend eventually to have the Pakistan-Afghanistan border fenced. We believe that good fences make good neighbours."

Also in October 2016, India announced that it would completely "seal" its 3300 km border with Pakistan. Building a physical wall will be difficult due to the rugged terrain, but there is talk of a "laser wall" that would detect any attempt to cross over.

This list is by no means exhaustive and border walls are nothing new. There was the Great Wall of China and the Hadrian's wall in England, among many. But those walls were built to protect a country against military attacks by other countries. Building walls for that purpose would be laughable with today's warfare. Instead, in the 21st century, most walls and fences are built to keep poor people from bothering rich people. This is often done under the guise of stopping drug traffickers or terrorists – labels that are often attached to poor people. On a smaller scale, gated communities do the same thing and they are becoming popular here as well. @@@



One wall we do support - street barricade, G20 in Hamburg

Who to vote for in the 2017 NZ election based on your star sign

By our resident astrologer Mx Winter

Aries (March 21 - April 19)

Aries, you're pretty driven by two things: #1. Your brain #2. Your parents. Are your parents wealthy? You're probably voting National. Are your parents not too wealthy? You've probably got an inkling of social / class consciousness and are voting Labour. You're too busy and hot headed to vote for a minor party. Go big or go home, that's your mantra, and honestly you're often swinging between those two options. Don't worry, you've got a bit more time to make up your mind.

The answer: Go home.

Taurus (April 20 - May 20)

You kind of wish you could be a socialist but you're really comfortable sitting down. I mean like, what you'd really like to be is someone who's *involved*, you'd like to not only go to some political rallies but you'd like to hang out with those hot anarchists *after* the rally and you'd like to *smash John Key's windows* with them. Too bad John Key isn't even in office any more, time to wake up and update your fantasies. You will probably take some real action this year and that action will probably be putting *spray paint* onto a *National Party billboard*.

The answer: Vote Green.

Gemini (May 21 - June 20)

Fuck you Gemini. Just do it. Just vote for the Legalise Cannabis party. Pretend it's because you care about medical usage. Okay you probably do actually care about medical usage and, yeah okay this shit really should be legal. But is that really the one biggest issue right now? You're a little overwhelmed by the system and you're standing by a policy you can trust. I respect that but I just like, don't care.

The answer: Legalise Cannabis Party.

Cancer (June 21 - July 22)

Cancer you're a lot more conservative than you look, and there's nothing wrong with that, right? You've probably never had an asymmetrical haircut but you've definitely had a dangerously short haircut once

or twice and your friends and family think of you as kind, but cool. What I'm saying is – you dress cool, Cancer and you care about people, but that care often comes out as believing in the 'greater good' and in 'family values' and in the 'economy'. There's nothing inherently evil about you, just like there's nothing inherently evil about your uncle who's a cop because he's actually a really good guy. You can see where I'm going with this.

The answer: Vote National.

Leo (July 23 - August 22)

Leo I know you've thought about this before but you should probably be running for office. Not necessarily because you have really well thought-out political views or an extra strong social conscious but because you've always wanted a platform, and if you had a platform, you'd speak in a way that was clear and calm. Some (most, all) of us (except you) don't want to be politicians because being a politician would hugely fucking suck. But you Leo, you're willing to sacrifice details of your private, inner life to have a piece of that pie, to sit on top of it, to have the pie named after you.

The answer: Run for local office and/or vote for an MP whose hand you've touched in the past. Possibly NZ First.

Virgo (August 23 - September 22)

Chill out Virgo. We both know you've been worrying about who to vote for since the last election and we both know how much energy you put into pretending you don't really care about this election. You're not cool and chill, Virgo. You are a little bit anarchist but even though you've thoroughly considered the ideals surrounding ethical non-voting, you're going to vote. You still don't fundamentally believe that your vote matters in this twisted, pseudo-democratic system (you're right), and so you hate tactical voters and impure strategies. Just vote for the party you like, believe in, the most.

The answer: Vote Mana. Yeah that Internet Party alliance last election was more than embarrassing but it's their heart that counts, also their aggressive focus on Tino Rangatiratanga.

Libra (September 23 - October 22)

Libra have you heard about the bubble? That the spaces we share our political views in are quickly becoming echo-chambers, that Facebook and 'friends lists' make it easier than ever to mute voices that disagree with us and easier still to hit 'like' with no further thought or interaction? You're not immune to this. The views of the people around you *are your views*, because they get to curate your sources of news and media and memes. I hope you chose your friends wisely.

The answer: Vote something 'liberal', believe that the huge non-voting population are somehow "the problem" and not actually a "huge symptom of an inherently ineffective and disempowering system".

Scorpio (October 23 - November 21)

Scorpio, seriously, why are you so serious about hiding who you're voting for? True, you're mysterious about everything that you do and this is all part of your vibe I guess. You seem to be thinking really hard about it, you'll probably actually google the different parties' policies at some point before the election, but you won't talk to any of your close friends or family about it. At the end of the day you'll complete your civic duty with a sense of uplifting finality. You'll feel like you've completed something secretive but right, you'll hold your head high, we'll all wish we had your quiet confidence and endurance.

The answer: Vote Labour after strongly considering voting National.

Sagittarius (November 22 - December 21)

You are in a constant cycle of self actualisation and re-forming. It's not just another day for you because today you are a new version of you. Your atoms are all fresh or something, the cells in your body die and are re-created and once every seven years you become a being who doesn't possess a single one of your original cells. Re-form as someone leading the way to a brighter political horizon, one with 'common sense' politics but not 'too racist' ones.

The Answer: The Opportunities Party.

Capricorn (December 22 - January 19)

Capricorn. You have so many ideals but you're so practical about how to make them happen. This is rare and impressive – not only do you make lofty goals but you work hard to make them real. Hard work is your forte and this election is no different – you're reading the pamphlets, you're responding to your friends' political posts on Facebook, you're active and engaged. You know what 'first past the post' means, and that's like, not even related to our current

system of government. When it comes to V-day you've got a well-informed and considered answer. You might not be driven by your heart, but your practical and logical belief that National needs to get the fuck out of the driver's seat will lead you to the booth no matter what.

The answer: Vote Labour because let's be honest it's basically a two-party system right now and they're the only big enough threat to National – it's like a lesser-of-two-evils thing kind of like Hillary vs Trump – you've got stats to back that up.

Aquarius (January 20 - February 18)

Statistically, at least one more sign must be voting National. Aquarius, sorry but it's probably you.

Pisces (February 19 - March 20)

Pisces, let's be honest, you're usually putting others before yourself. You are often able to feel others needs and boy are you good at fulfilling them. It would seem logical that election time is your moment to really strive for the greater good, to advocate for the underdogs, to find that balance between voting Green and Making a Real Impact. But the elections really bring out your dark side in a way I didn't expect. You're pretty convinced that if only everyone voted the same as you, things would be much more fair and simple. We all think that way to an extent, but you're taking it one step further. You're filling out other people's voting papers. I'm not even kidding, this is a thing I've seen Pisces do on multiple occasions. We all have family members or like, old neighbours who never collect their mail, but Pisces collects that shit and they'll tick the boxes for them and they'll make sure their vote is counted 3-4 times.

The answer: Party Vote Green / MP Vote Labour consistently across 4 different people's forms. @@@



Happy protesting?

By Sojourn

The long-standing call for the abolition of the police may finally come to fruition but I fear that it won't be the demise of the police as such; it could be the rise of self-policing and self-surveillance and the side-lining of protest.

You can see it happening now in this country. It's common for 'activists' to regularly supply the police (and other intelligence agencies) with photos of people who attend rallies, demonstrations and courtcases. On blogs and other sites we upload pictures and videos of people holding banners, pulling away police barriers, supporting people at court or doing any other activities that the state identifies as nefarious or dissenting. We also upload the same type of images on facebook, where we sometimes even identify the people by tagging them. We save the state a lot of money and time by doing our own surveillance for them. We might as well send a postcard listing names and roles – or re-invent police watch-cards and this time, instead of us identifying cops to watch out for, we just put on the names of our own people and their details.

We also often officially work with the police. Already, it is now quite common for groups organising demonstrations to liaise with police and have designated 'activists' act as police liaison officers. I've been CC'ed (not even BCC'ed) into emails and sent lists which includes the police officer. The cop gets to see private email addresses and sometimes even phone numbers. I fear that they may be even included in some email loops for organising.

It's also common now to have marshals. Even for very small marches or rallies that will gather only 10 or 30 people, groups will organise their own marshals



ensuring law and order is maintained. To ensure that we all toe the line and no one's peace is disturbed.

But they forget whose peace we are trying not to disturb. They forget that the pretense of peace is built on the violence of colonialism and capitalism that shapes the country (and world) we live in.

Over the last couple of decades it feels as if protest is slowly becoming more and more stifled and stultified. More and more it feels like what is considered a good protest is just polite token civil action; the likes of blockades and pickets are often considered too violent, people prefer a march. And even better – a peaceful march that stays on the pavement. Most protests now seem to be deliberate actions to cause minimal disruption to anyone, the least disruptive being polite 'virtual occupations' organised via facebook. Is there honestly a belief we can win by showing virtually how angry we are?

It feels as if no one wants to do more than politely rock the boat – a little. Is protest becoming more about letting ourselves feel good because at least we did something?

After decades of neo-liberal politics, I can see how modern protesting fits well in the neo-liberal agenda. If you feel that facebook likes and dislikes, and focus groups and public meetings are not working, neo-liberalism now supports getting out on the street and showing your anger (for a bit). You can chant and have fun and maybe even meet someone special (there's now an app for finding a sexual partner on a demo). After all, it's all about the individual being happy and empowered. To protest can be a fun experience. We can feel as if we have acted and done our bit 'cos "it's a freedom that we have and others don't."

As a result, too many of our protests and demonstrations are becoming non-events. For example, we'll march along occupying only half a street (or even stay on the footpath) or we'll stand in front of parliament behind the barriers and call for help from those inside (during the June 6th protest to unwelcome US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson people actually chanted for the prime minister Bill English to save us). We'll keep ourselves safe, then go home happy in the belief that we've done our bit.

Dissent is neutralized and managed. And as this becomes normalized, I can see the labeling of good protestors and bad protestors becoming greater.

Housing collective

By Sam Buchanan

ONE OF the great Catch-22s of capitalism is that any collective effort YOU put into improving something means THEY can make more money out of it.

Gentrification is, perhaps, the best example of this. If people make a place nice to live in, by encouraging community events, lobbying for better public transport, rioting (which often leads to panicked government investment), or encouraging music or art, or many other things that improve people's lives, house prices skyrocket. You can pretty much identify areas that will boom according to how many anarchists live there – anarchists tend to be mobile, inquisitive and good at finding places which are still cheapish but where there's lots going on.

In Wellington, the property market has followed anarchists from Te Aro, to Newtown, to Lyall Bay. In London, my old haunts around Brixton, almost a no-go area for respectable people back in the day, are now fashionable as hell. Some years ago, I moved back to my old home town of Paekakariki, a small town north of Wellington, famous for its levels of community participation, its beach, its sad attachment to the

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Remember the 2015 protests against the signing of the TPPA in Auckland? People were split into good and bad protestors. The good people had a protest set at a certain time marching a certain route to ensure minimal disruption and a peaceful day. The bad people blocked traffic and tried to disturb the peace.

Good stropky angry protests are a rare event and mass-mobilisation of people and the building of movements (especially revolutionary ones) are becoming increasingly difficult and even feel like a fantasy at times. That's a problem we need to work on rectifying, otherwise I can see a future where protesting is like a vote in a national election. I can see a future where people attend occasional public 'child-friendly' protests in safe spaces then go home. They're doing their bit and they feel good.

If we're not careful, we'll be part of the movement that helped free up the police to harass even more the low-income, wrong ethnicity, wrong-coloured, wrong-gendered people in 'our society'. People guilty by default. @@@

Green Party and its rapidly rising property prices.

Paekakariki is a magnet for wealthy leftists and arty types, mostly thanks to the number of mostly much less wealthy people who run around doing things.

Recently the town hit the headlines when a local family was looking like having to move out of town as their rented house was being put up for sale, at a price they couldn't afford. In response, a group of people announced they planned to form a collective, buy the house in question and rent it back to the current residents. Soon after, another family popped up to say they would buy the house, and hold it for a year until the collective raised the funds to purchase it themselves.

Since then, the house has been purchased by the family as planned, and the collective has looked at models for social housing and plans to form a trust, and raise money through donations and low-interest loans, while thrashing out its kaupapa and structure. The hope is to expand beyond the initial single house, and create a pool of affordable housing in the town.

So far so good. Of course, there are problems with this. On the positive side, it's a practical response to unaffordable housing, and has a mutual aid outlook, aiming to keep people in the town who otherwise couldn't afford to live here, thus benefitting the community by maintaining diversity and hanging on to people engaged in community activities. There's also a desire to support members of the local hapu, who have been hit particularly hard by rising prices, to remain here, or to return.

On the other hand, it's a model that will only work in a place which already includes people wealthy enough to invest in property, albeit in a low return scheme with a 'social dividend'. It's own members have criticized the suggestion of favouring 'the deserving poor', which is exactly what they are doing. Being based in a relatively well-off community, it ain't going to get anyone out of living in a car.

Nevertheless, I like this scheme and hope it grows. It may be operating within the constraints of capitalism, but I don't see much likelihood of the wealthy being driven out of the nicer places at pitchfork point in the foreseeable future, and it's good that people are finding ways to look after each other, and not expecting the state or capitalism to sort things out. @@@

A superb flaying of a Rant on Empire

Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World by Niall Ferguson

Allen Lane, 2003

Reviewed by Sam Buchanan

NIALL FERGUSON has made a rather good career as a revisionist pop historian, mostly by virtue of the old trick of saying things that are bound to annoy people, and the newer trick of writing books that seem tailored to adaptation as TV mini-series. *Empire* is a pretty good read, minor spelling and editing mistakes aside, with lots of pictures, and it did lead to a TV series.

It's asking a lot to cover the history of the world's largest empire in 350-odd fairly text-light pages, so there's noticeable gaps. That would be fair enough if they weren't rather selective. There's almost no mention of the British colonies of Burma and Malaya. The genocide of the Tasmanians gets two sentences (followed by a longer ramble about the appointment of 'Aboriginal Protectors', which he notes were ineffectual, but claims restrained the Aussies from dealing to the Aboriginals in the way the United States colonists dealt to Native Americans). The Opium Wars gets a paragraph, from which you could conclude it was a minor matter which resulted in Britain claiming Hong Kong. The effects of the war on China, and that of the opium trade, aren't mentioned, save for the latter's profitability. He states that the Treaty of Nanking doesn't mention opium (it does, in Article 4). Kipling, on the other hand, gets a couple of pages to himself.

New Zealand readers will find little mention of the country save references to troops fighting for Britain in its later wars. There is a couple of sentences on the execution of the missionary C S Volkner who Ferguson says "...fell out of favour with the Oritiki (sic) Maoris by urging them to desist from bloodshed when war broke out with a rival clan in 1865. One of the Oritiki chiefs shot him, decapitated him in his own church, drank his blood and swallowed both his eyes."

Volkner was hanged, not shot, wasn't decapitated in his church, the guy who ate his eyes, Kereopa Te Rau,

wasn't from Oritiki (he was Ngati Rangiwewehi) and didn't kill Volkner. The war in question was the wide conflict around the Waikato and Second Taranaki Wars, not a dust up with "a rival clan". Volkner's death may have been partially an act of revenge, but was primarily due to his acting as a spy for the government. This killing is one of the best documented incidents in the early colonial history of New Zealand – there were both Maori and Pakeha witnesses to the killing and at least two subsequent trials. Ferguson doesn't provide a reference (none of the book's text is referenced) for his claim that Volkner preached non-violence, something no other account I've seen has mentioned, but the bibliography lists a couple of accounts of missionary activity, which is presumably where Ferguson uncritically copied this tall story from.

Despite all the academic weaknesses, it's better than I expected, if you discount the introduction and conclusion. Ferguson does a reasonable job of chronicling the British Empire's brutality and banality, from the bloody slaughter at Omdurman to Lord Mountbatten's fondness for plotting his blue-blooded genealogy using a system designed for pedigree cattle breeders. The biggest problem with the book is its rather familiar right-wing structure of first asserting that something is under debate (was the British Empire a good or bad thing?), throwing around a lot of anecdotes and bits of seemingly random information, then simply asserting that you've made your case. There seems no attempt to link his historical facts with the case he's trying to make.

Ferguson just doesn't appear to be able to string an argument together – he'll make an assertion, then immediately provide evidence that undermines it, as in his discussion of the early colonisation of the United States in which he claims that the profit-motive wasn't enough to attract immigrants, and the religious motivation of the Quaker settlers was crucial to immigration, then immediately tell us that the majority of the settlers arriving on the Mayflower weren't Quakers, but were fisherman motivated by profits from cod fishing, who were soon joined by

profit-seeking farmers and fur trappers. Likewise, in introducing the history of missionary activity he says the Victorian British were motivated by “elevated aspirations”, then proceed to tell us that the British rulers of India were intent of keeping the missionaries well away from their profit-making, and that the missionaries themselves saw commerce and Anglicisation as an inevitable part of their mission. Nor do ‘elevated aspirations’ really square with the acts of genocide and drug-smuggling he mentions.

The conclusion is (surprise, surprise) that the British Empire was a good thing. He reckons it “pioneered free trade” (after telling us it employed tariff protection against Indian cloth imports until technology had rendered British manufactures cheaper), it “enforced the rule of law” (he lists too many acts of brute force and dodgy dealing to mention), it “maintained a global peace unmatched before or since” (he says Britain fought 72 wars during Victoria’s reign alone, and a large chunk of the book is about the Boer War, the World Wars, the Seven Years War, the Sudan War and a few others) and it spread “the institutions of parliamentary democracy” (which it mostly denied to those under its rule). Finally, he falls back on the old colonialist chestnut that it was better than the alternatives, citing the brutality of the Nazi and Japanese empires that it helped inspire. Arguably true, but ‘better than the Nazis’ isn’t much of a eulogy. He cites Japanese brutality as “beyond anything the British had ever done”. It’s hard to compare atrocities, but Tasmanians and African slaves might disagree.

Ferguson thinks Britain sacrificed its empire in order to defeat fascism: “Did not that sacrifice alone expunge all the Empire’s other sins”. Umm, no, not really. Britain failed to protect its colonies from fascism, letting Malaya, Singapore and Burma fall to Japan, its colonial shenanigans and collusion with earlier Japanese expansion left China easy prey for the Japanese imperialists. Britain’s participation in World War Two might have hastened decolonisation, but that certainly wasn’t the intention of its rulers.

Originally from Scotland, now US-based, Ferguson claims to have been a Thatcherite “before it was fashionable”, which seems unlikely given he was about fifteen when Thatcher became prime minister. His accounts of his years at university goading the supposed left-wing establishment suggests he’s one of those brattish right-wingers who love to paint themselves as rebels, Davids boldly pitted against the lefty student union Goliaths, backed only by the forces of international capitalism, the wealthy and the ruling elite.

Empire is basically a rant, but with a real political purpose. The mistakes and poor reasoning don’t matter, as the right isn’t writing for a sophisticated or critical audience, the goal is to convince readers and TV watchers that British imperialism was quite a good thing, and equally dangerously, so is the current imperialism of the United States.

Ferguson approvingly quotes former British leader Tony Blair’s enthusiastic calls for overseas intervention by Western powers, and British diplomat Robert Cooper’s advocacy for “post-modern imperialism” and “the opportunities, perhaps even the need for colonization”. Finally, he quotes Kipling on “the White Man’s Burden” and tells us the US is the honourable heir to Britain: “And just like the British Empire before it, the American Empire unfailingly acts in the name of liberty, even when its own self-interest is manifestly uppermost”. Not so long ago, this nonsense would have been written off as the ravings of a nutbar, it should worry us that it’s getting accepted into the mainstream. @@@



Police practising diving techniques at G20, Hamburg

How neoliberalism killed space travel

**David Graeber: *The Utopia of Rules*
Melville House, 2015**

Reviewed by Peppertree

I don't know if John Key ever read David Graeber's *The Utopia of Rules*, but he managed to sum it up pretty well in one mangled sentence when he said: "We have a set of rules that say, you have to stick to those rules otherwise basically the wheels fall off." ⁽¹⁾

Graeber's contention is that we love rules because they give us freedom. He resolves this apparent contradiction by exploring why we like to play games. Games, unlike real life, are run under a simple set of clear and transparent rules. And, unlike in real life, the rules apply to everyone equally and if you stick to them you have a good chance of winning. This, Graeber argues, provides us with a degree of freedom that real life rarely offers and that is why we enjoy games – they're a utopia of rules.

This is juxtaposed with the concept of "free play" as an unrestricted expression of creativity – which can be either liberating or deadly horrifying (think Guantanamo or Kim Jong-un), and therefore we're scared of an absence of rules.

Graeber arrives at all this in a wide sweep across the developments that neo-liberalism has brought, by coming up with his "iron law of liberalism". It states that any government initiative that claims to reduce bureaucracy ends up doing the exact opposite. A look at what the Key government (expressly elected on the promise of getting rid of "faceless bureaucrats" and "red tape") has achieved proves Graeber right: Auckland now has no less than 726 liquor ban zones, each with its own council regulation, geographic boundary and signage. As for the "faceless bureaucrats", the organisations that represent facelessness like no others, the GCSB and the SIS, now employ many more people than they did before John Key took office. Where government departments have actually reduced the number of staff, the jobs have simply been moved to call centres in Malaysia.

But Graeber's biggest complaint is the absence of

flying cars and other things that he claims he was promised in sci-fi stories in his youth. While the imaginations of previous generations have mostly materialised, he was short changed ⁽²⁾. And he does seem to have a point, at least for people in the industrialised world. My grandparents' generation experienced how the automobile completely displaced the horse-drawn carriage, they saw the first plane, the first space rocket and the first moon landing, the invention of radio and television, as well as what happens when you split atoms. Pretty much every Jules Verne book has become reality in their lifetime. Compare that to what Graeber considers the major inventions of the last 50 years – the internet and the cell phone. Mere improvements to communication, he says, nothing fundamentally new. He blames this on neo-liberalism's focus on 'accountability', which has turned universities from places that allowed mad professors to come up with bizarre ideas into factories that churn out efficient bureaucrats.

This is all true and correct, but Graeber seriously underestimates the impact computerisation has had on things like manufacturing and warfare (he plainly denies the existence of robots because they don't look like the robotic maid in the TV series *The Jetsons*) and he ignores developments in areas that weren't at the core of sci-fi fantasies, probably because they don't make for good adventure stories. Take genetic engineering for example, which enables humans to literally "play god" - but Graeber ignores that in his essay on free play.

Also, there are other reasons why we don't spend our holidays on Mars. Since the middle of the 20th century we actually have a pretty clear picture of the laws of physics. Unlike previous generations, we know how far away the next galaxy is and how impossible it is to go there, even if we were able to travel at close to the speed of light. And this absence of measurable benefits from scientific discoveries is not for a lack of funding in fundamental research – the European particle lab CERN has a budget some countries would be envious of. Still nothing practical comes from it. No one believes that the discovery of the Higgs Boson means that Scotty will be able to "beam us up" anytime soon.

A Farmer re-Acts



The reasons are not neo-liberalism or capitalism, they're simply physics.

One thing that has fundamentally changed since my grandparents' generation is human interaction, i.e. exactly the communication technology that Graeber dismisses as unimportant. By concentrating on physical inventions, like flying cars and cities on the moon, he misses how much virtual internet reality is gaining on our physical world. Teleportation becomes a moot point when our lives happen on Facebook anyway.

In the end, Graeber's conclusions raise more questions than they answer. Are concepts like transparency inherently bad because they lead to more bureaucracy? Is it regrettable that we don't have a colony on the moon? Are human beings truly out of their depth without a rule book? Graeber simplifies a

lot of things, ignores facts that don't fit his line of thought and draws dubious conclusions, but this book sure offers a good read and plenty of food for thought, along with a lot of interesting side notes. Or did you know where the word 'taxi' comes from? @@@

Footnotes

(1) Key was referring to his decision in September 2015 to deport a climate change refugee from Kiribati.

(2) Graeber wasn't the only one expecting regular space travel to be a reality by now. In 1965, then Wellington mayor Frank Kitts welcomed police commissioners from around the Pacific to a conference with the prospect that sometime during their lives "the police cadets attending training school today [...] may actually be concerned by interplanetary crime."

QUIZ

How much do you know about things very vaguely related to anarchism?

1. Pioneering feminist Margaret Sanger would get furious at the mention of which famous anarchist's name?
2. What company produced trucks with a chrome badge featuring a capital 'A' in a circle?
3. Donald Trump and Winston Churchill both won a single election as leader of their respective countries. What did the election results have in common?
4. Former New Zealand prime minister John Key attained success in what field before entering politics?
5. Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa raised funds by selling what rights to a US media company?
6. What political claim did fictional journalist Tintin make during his first conversation with the King of Sylvania?

Answers: 1. Emma Goldman – Sanger felt Goldman had stolen her ideas. 2. Former British company Seddon-Atkinson, whose trucks were manufactured in Spain until 2009. 3. Their main opponent got more votes. 4. Being an arsehole. 5. Exclusive rights to film his battles with government troops. 6. "I'm not an anarchist".



RECIPE

Molly McGuire's Cookery Corner presents:

Got too much flour left over from making glue? Then make some flour bombs. All you need is wet paper towels, rubber bands and, of course, the flour.

1. Separate the layers of the paper towel, only one layer is best. Too many layers means the bomb won't explode.
2. Wet the single layer of paper towel.
3. Put in a fistful or more of flour
4. Fold up the edges.
5. Tie up with a rubber band.
6. Dampen it with more water.

Now you have a flour bomb.

If you want to make a coloured flour bomb, it is a bit more complicated.

1. In a large bowl mix water into your flour and when it's nearly a thick solid paste add some food colouring.
2. Mix well.
3. Roll the flour out on a hard surface and then leave to dry, this takes nearly two days.
4. When dry, pulverise the mix until it turns into a powder.

Make a flour bomb.



In June 2016, several people managed to enter a weapons conference in Paris. Some members of the group climbed on a tank whilst others threw coloured flour bombs.